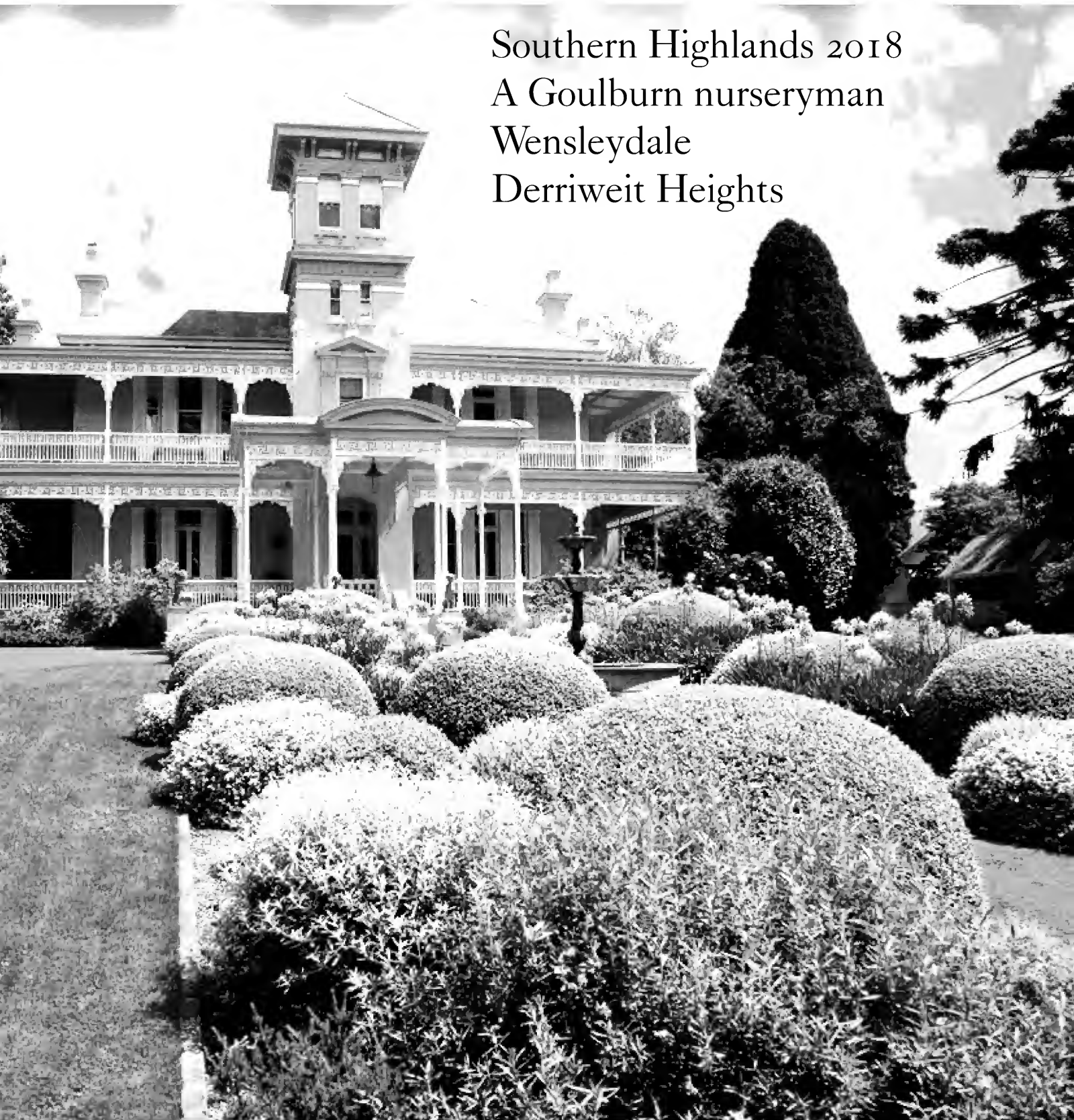
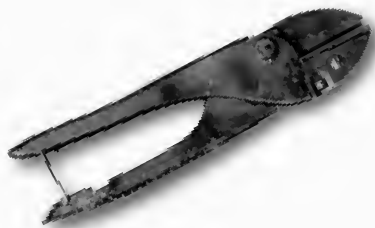


# Australian Garden HISTORY

vol 29 no 4 April 2018

Southern Highlands 2018  
A Goulburn nurseryman  
Wensleydale  
Derriweit Heights





# Snippets

## A hidden garden in Euroa

The residence of 'Blairgowrie' is one of a number of historic buildings in the town of Euroa in central Victoria. It was built as a home for the chemist Mr H London in 1890. London had his name, his wife's name and the date of the building inscribed on the upper part of the building's Victorian wedding-cake facade. An interpretive sign in the front garden describes the facade's ornamentation as 'vermiculated', a word insisted upon by the most recent owner, and one guaranteed to stop passers-by.

Blairgowrie's Italianate mosaic tiled entrance leads to rooms including a cellar and a bank vault whose safe door is still in place. A large timber garage on the northern boundary of the property was used as a dispensary by one — or perhaps more than one — of the chemists who lived in the house at various times.

### Away from the street

The surprising aspect of Blairgowrie is its private garden behind the house, hidden completely from the street by the house and its attached shopfront. The garden was designed in the 1990s by Melbourne landscape architect John Patrick, whose plan shows hedges of lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia* and *L. dentata*) leading up to a small circular lawn on a higher level. The lavender hedges were planted and have thrived. But as happens with many garden designs, some plants have gone, and others which were not part of the original plan have made their way into the garden.

A high brick wall runs along part of the southern boundary of the garden. Two large specimens of the freely suckering North American tree *Robinia pseudoacacia* predating the John Patrick design once took up much of the outlook. They were removed about ten years ago, together with a Chinese elm at the back of the garden. Existing trees today which were not on the plan include a *Eucalyptus caesia* 'Silver Princess', and a large Washington navel orange in the central part of the lower lawn.

What did this garden look like in its early decades? Would present plantings be more in keeping with the house's heritage values without the 'non-plan' trees? A number of roses were specified in Patrick's garden plan. They have vanished — or perhaps they were never planted. Should Mme Alfred Carriere, Ophelia, Mme Gregoire Staechelin, Mrs Herbert Stevens and *Rosa laevigata* make a sweeping feminine entrance now? Where does the line lie between a current owner's inclinations, and any dictates of a historical nature?

This is a modest domestic garden in Euroa. Its scale and purpose are different from those with which the Society is usually concerned. Still, it prompts the kinds of question which must be often in the minds of those involved with significant historic gardens and landscapes.

And, in fact, it is a significant garden to this particular writer. My parents occupied Euroa's Blairgowrie for a couple of decades in the latter years of their lives, my father until November 2017. I have weeded it often.

### The Snipper

Left: The hidden garden of Blairgowrie in Euroa, before the John Patrick plan was implemented.  
photo courtesy Marj Atkinson, Euroa

Below: Blairgowrie's garden in 2017. photo Bernadette Hince



**Cover** In 2016 James Fairfax AC gave his home, the Italianate-style Retford Park at Bowral in the NSW Southern Highlands, to the National Trust of Australia (NSW). The house was built in 1887 for Samuel and Jane Hordern. Its gardens feature a remarkable collection of mature evergreen and deciduous trees, hedged gardens, and a knot garden. One of the highlights of AGHS's national conference in October 2018, to be held this year in the Southern Highlands, will be a visit to Retford Park.  
photo Tony Sheffield, Highlife Publications



# Editorial

Meg Probyn, 2018 Conference Chair

AGHS's Southern Highlands branch is looking forward to hosting the 39th annual national conference of the Australian Garden History Society. Its theme is *Gardens in Times of Peace and Conflict*. The conference will be held on Friday 26 to Sunday 28 October 2018 in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, with an optional day of activities on Monday 29 October 2018.

From Dr Charles Throsby's first explorations in the Southern Highlands in 1817, land started to be settled by Europeans— for at least 40,000 years previously, the area was inhabited by Aboriginal people: the Gundungarra or Wodi Wodi (a sub-group of the Dharawal nation). Throsby always took local Aboriginal guides with him and through his records some Indigenous words have been preserved in local place-names such as Wingecarribee, Burradoo, Mittagong, Bong Bong, Bowral and Bundanoon.

After the railway opened in 1867, three governors leased homes in the Southern Highlands before a property (later renamed Hillview) was purchased by the NSW Government in 1882. There was a blossoming of country houses built by the Sydney gentry who wanted to escape the humidity of Sydney and be near the Governor.

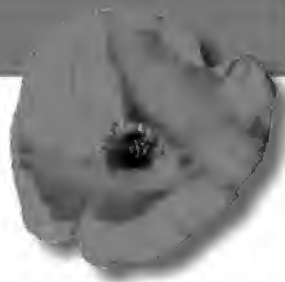
## The conference

Charlotte Webb will open the conference with an overview of the Southern Highlands' history and an introduction to the development of living memorials in Australia. Other speakers will include Adrian Howard on the completion of Hobart's Soldiers Memorial Avenue; Phil Roberts on Ballarat's Avenue and Arch; Ian Scott and Greg Jackson on the Remembrance Driveway; Graham Wilson on the diversity of war memorials as part of Australian cultural landscape; William Oates on women's contribution to the war effort (Agricultural Security Production Service); Frances Simons on gardens created by prisoners of war; Linda Emery on the 'Poppy seed project'; Elizabeth Ganguly on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the designs of the cemeteries and memorials by eminent people such as Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll; Stuart Read on the need for AGHS to lead in advocacy for our landscape heritage, sometimes ruffling feathers; and John Dwyer on weed conflicts and why it should be time to call a truce.

The conference will be held in the Mittagong RSL which has excellent facilities including a motel (Springs Resorts) and is close to shops and accommodation. A day and a half of lectures will be followed by a day and a half of garden visits. The optional Monday tour of six gardens should not be missed.

Details of the pre and post-conference tours are on p 29 of this issue.

We very much look forward to welcoming you!

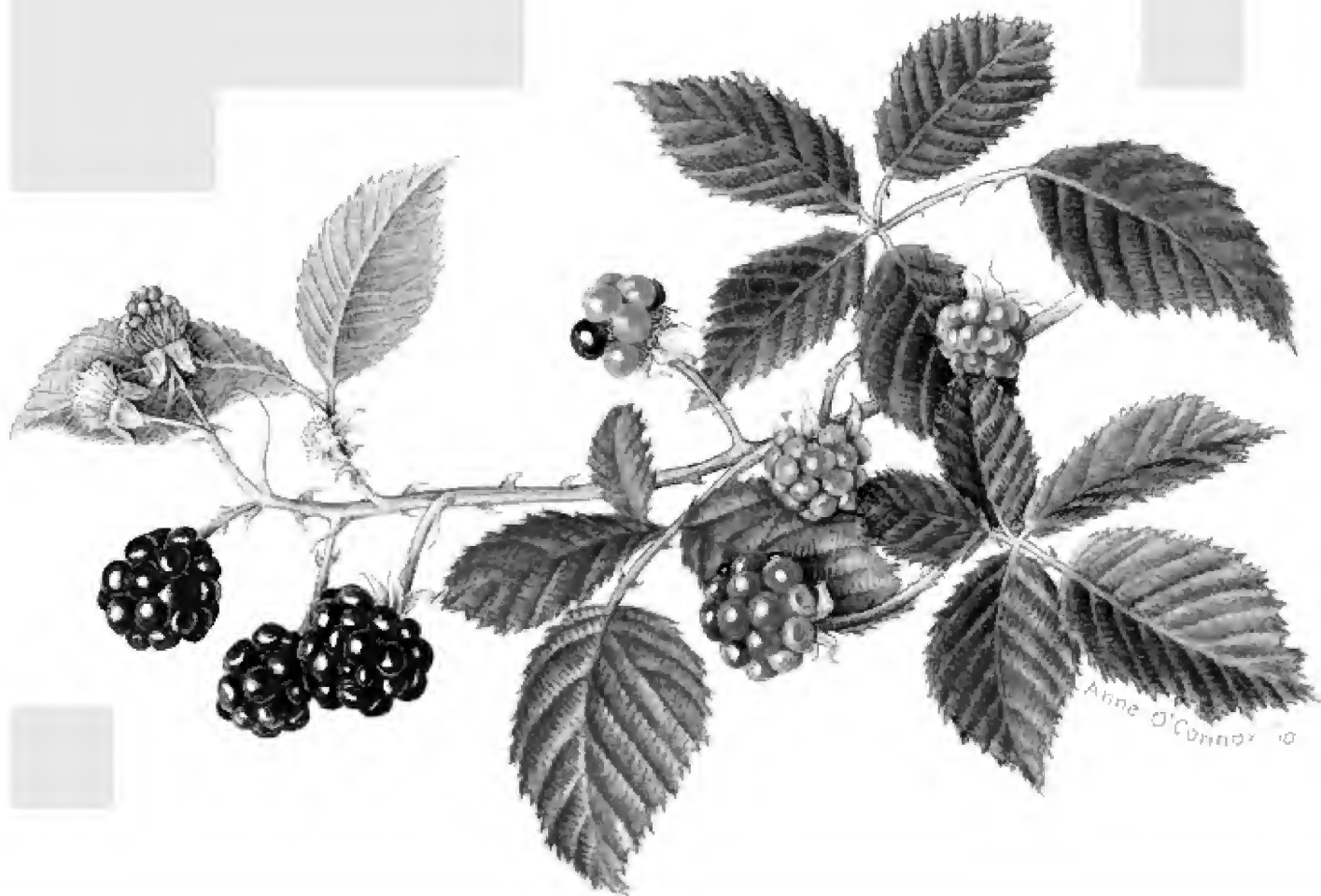


## Contents

- 4 Blackberry**  
John Dwyer
- 8 Arthur Goodhew's Goulburn nursery**  
Claire Baddeley
- 11 Love and happiness in garden conservation**  
Steve Brown
- 14 Wensleydale and its garden**  
Sandra Kearney
- 17 Derriweit Heights, Mount Macedon**  
Tim Gatehouse
- 21 Subtropic baroque: a Queensland palm garden**  
Glenn R Cooke
- 24 Ephemera on Woodbridge nursery**  
John Viska
- 26 Diamond Botanical Gardens, Saint Lucia**  
Anne Cochrane
- 29 AGHS news**
- 30 For the bookshelf**
- 32 Exhibitions**
- 34 Dialogue**
- 35 AGHS contacts**
- 36 Getting to know them**  
Dame Elisabeth Murdoch



photo Les Musgrave



John Dwyer

# Blackberry

*'If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries I would give no man a reason upon compulsion'*

Falstaff in *King Henry IV*, Part I, Act II, Scene 4

Watercolour of  
blackberries by Anne  
O'Connor.

by permission of  
the artist

With the benefit of hindsight, the introduction of blackberry plants (*Rubus fruticosus* L agg.) to Australia and New Zealand was a serious mistake. The European blackberry or bramble varies considerably, giving rise to 'an excessive multiplication of supposed species' (Bentham and Hooker 1909). Botanists disagree about the treatment of blackberries, but it is now customary to use '*R. fruticosus* L agg.' as the generic name of the species complex. Charles Darwin anticipated this outcome in a passage near the end of *On the origin of species*: 'The endless disputes whether or not some fifty species of British brambles are good species will cease'.

It is hardly surprising that blackberries were introduced to Australia, as Europeans had been using them for food and medicine for thousands of years. In England and Ireland, and throughout Europe, Russia and central Asia, people were used to them growing in hedges, thickets, woods and waste places, providing food for free with little or no cultivation. Pliny (AD 23–79) and Dioscorides (fl. 60–77 AD) demonstrate the use of blackberries as medicine in Roman times.

Blackberries have been used in hedges since Roman times or possibly earlier. In *De re rustica*, Columella (4 – c70 AD) gave a detailed account taken from 'the most ancient authors' of how best to establish a hedge of 'the largest thorns' using brambles, 'what we call dog's thorn' roses and Jerusalem thorn.

It seems that blackberries were cultivated in England chiefly in hedges or living fences, but the plant also had a place for its beauty, edibility and



dyeing ability. Writing in the early 20th century, FG Savage (1923) described the despatch of 500–600 kg of berries daily from English village stations at the height of the season.

Although blackberries were included in Professor Buckman's prize-winning essay 'On agricultural weeds' (1855, in *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* vol 16), their omission from Winifred Brenchley's *Weeds of farm land* (1920) suggests that they were not regarded as significant agricultural weeds in England. It is true that in William Pitt's pioneering essay 'On the subject of weeding: or the improvements to be effected in agriculture by the extirpation of weeds' (1806, in *Communications to the Board of Agriculture* vol 5), he wrote that as 'smooth underwoods' were to be encouraged in plantations, 'briers and brambles should be grubbed up as making the plantation inaccessible even to its owner'. He did not, however, speak of blackberries as weeds of hedges, nor of gardens, corn-fields, meadows and pastures, nor of waste and uncultivated land. There is also the 1619 observation attributed to the botanist John Goodyer (1592–1664) in Johnson's edition of Gerard's *Herbal* (1633), that the bramble or black-berry bush 'growes common enough in most places, and too common in ploughed fields'.

## Introduction to Australia

Given the long folk history, it is not surprising that blackberries were introduced to Australia, but there is much uncertainty as to when this happened. As blackberries were not included in the comprehensive list of Plants in the Colony set out in Governor King's despatch to Lord Hobart dated 9 May 1803, their introduction was apparently after that date.

'There does not appear to be any evidence to show when and by whom the first plants were introduced', William Bayley, Fellow of the Royal Australian Historical Society, wrote in *Blackberries in Australia* (1962). He noted that an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 11 January 1851 claimed that blackberries then on sale in George Street, from the garden of Mr Mort, were believed to be the first produced in the colony. This drew a response in the *Bathurst Free Press* of 1 February 1851 that 'upwards of 10 years ago our district could boast this plant and can now show about 2000 in bearing'. Bayley took this as an indication that the blackberry was planted in the Bathurst district in the late 1830s.

In Daniel Bunce's 1836 *Catalogue of plants on sale at Denmark Hill Nursery in Hobart town*, 'barberry' but not 'blackberry' was listed,

suggesting that blackberry had not then been introduced to Tasmania. The earliest date recorded is 1843. James Fenton (1820–1901), in *Bushlife in Tasmania* (1891), provided a first-hand account of the introduction of blackberries to Devon in the north of Tasmania. He had 'an inordinate love' for blackberries as a boy in England, and was delighted when an opportunity to grow some blackberry plants in Tasmania presented itself:

In the year 1843 there lived on the west bank of the Forth one Jacob Broadway, an old man who had been gardener in Launceston for Mr Philip Oakden. When he was up in town he called to see his old master. Mr Oakden had just received a blackberry plant in a pot from England. Whether it was the first plant of its kind in Tasmania I cannot say; however it was a novel importation to old Jacob and his former master. Mr Oakden gave Broadway six little cuttings from the said blackberry, which he unfortunately brought down to the Forth in Mr Drew's schooner *Waterwitch*. Next morning I found to my intense delight, that Jacob had six cuttings of this invaluable exotic, and I persuaded the old man to let me have three of them, as they might possibly fail to strike root with one, while they would stand a better chance under the care of two.

Oil painting 'Among the Brambles' (1890) by English artist Valentine Cameron Prinsep.

ART Collection/Alamy Stock Photo'



Fenton went on to describe the care lavished on his 'valued cuttings' and his 'unspeakable pleasure of seeing them put forth buds in due time'. In the next year he had a crop of 'splendid fruit in the autumn'. But 'two or three years after that date the blackberry quite astonished the settlers (including myself). Round the stumps and logs in every direction young blackberry bushes grew up luxuriantly and spread out violently.' He acknowledged that he had been 'one of the miscreants who inflicted the blackberry plague on the district', pleading in mitigation that, like the thistles, the docks and the sorrels, it would have come 'one way or another'. Eric Rolls, in *They all ran wild* (1977), described Fenton as 'a delightfully unrepentant sinner', but I think that the passage taken as a whole, and in particular the word 'unfortunately', shows him to be better described as rueful.

Oakden's 1843 importation was not the first, however. The earliest documented record in Australia is from the 'Catalogue of plants introduced by and cultivated in the garden of Mr

Stevenson, North Adelaide', published in the *South Australian Register* in 1842, which included blackberry.

## Blackberries and the Baron

By 1851 nine species of blackberry were under cultivation in the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. The director, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, will forever be associated with the spread in Victoria of blackberry. An enthusiastic member of the Acclimatization Society, in his *Annual Report for 1861–2* he set out the thousands of plants distributed: 'In the distribution of plants to public institutions I have been mindful to diffuse, as far as possible, also plants of particular utility simultaneously with those of ornamental character'. His list included 'the British Blackberry, which proves to be remarkably prolific'.

But Mueller's efforts went much further than this. It was his opinion, as expressed in *Select extra-tropical plants* (1885), and repeated in the 1895 edition, that blackberry deserved 'to be naturalized on the rivulets of any ranges'. There is anecdotal evidence from the recollection of Mrs James Fraser that Mueller scattered seeds of blackberry on his botanical rambles: 'He used always to carry a packet of blackberry seeds with him, and whenever he boiled his billy, he scattered a few around the ashes of his fire. He said that the poor people in time to come would bless him for his thoughtfulness' (*Victorian Naturalist* 1959 p 33).

## An Australian weed is made

Blackberries did not really need Mueller's assistance. In the *Sydney Mail* of 12 February 1887 it was reported that in the Illawarra district, blackberries formerly planted as hedges were ruining 'acre after acre of agricultural and pastoral lands', while the 'popular and profitable English pastime of blackberrying is now indulged in to the full, the neighbouring mountains and vales literally teeming with fruit of fine size and flavour'.

Recorded as naturalised in Victoria by 1887, blackberry was declared in 1894 to be a thistle within the meaning of the *Thistle Act 1890* (the strange system then for declaring noxious weeds) for three shires, Buln Buln, Warragul, and Rosedale. It was declared for the whole of Victoria in 1908. In 1909, blackberry was proclaimed a weed by the Commonwealth of

Byzantine drawing, dated to before AD 512, of *Rubus fruticosus* from the *Codex Aniciae Juliana*, the oldest illuminated version of Dioscorides' *Herbal*.  
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna





Blackberry gathering at Apolla [Apollo] Bay, Victoria; photograph by John Henry Harvey (1855–1938).  
State Library of Victoria

Australia. By 1918, it had been proclaimed noxious within 98 shires and municipalities in New South Wales, and was regarded by Joseph Henry Maiden (1859–1925), the Government Botanist and Director of the Botanic Gardens, Sydney, as the second-worst weed of that state, behind Bathurst burr (*Xanthium spinosum*).

Blackberry is today widespread in Victorian landscapes, and is regarded as one of the worst weeds in Australia. It is one of the 'Weeds of National Significance'. Blackberry has been described as 'a major threat to natural and agricultural ecosystems in Australia', having invaded some 8.8 million hectares. There has been some success with biological controls, but blackberry continues to be a very serious weed.

The fruit is still delicious, and blackberry continues to be used medicinally as an astringent, to treat diarrhoea and throat infections (*Medicinal plants of the world* p 277). But at what cost! We have not been able to manage blackberries well in Australia.

Few would grant Mueller the blessings he anticipated.

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**Dr John Dwyer** is a retired QC. His publications include articles in *Australian Garden History* about weeds and landscape. His book *Weeds, plants and people* was published in 2016, with assistance from the Kindred Spirits Fund. He is a former chairman of AGHS.



Claire Baddeley

## *Arthur Goodhew: Goulburn's seed and nurseryman*

Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co. unused colour postcard; advertising on the verso notes 'The Goulburn Seed & Nursery Co.'.

National Museum of Australia, 1986.0117.3485

After many decades as a nurseryman and in municipal life, Arthur Goodhew gave the City of Goulburn four acres of land where for 40 years he had conducted the Goulburn Seed and Nursery Company and Chislehurst Nursery. Included in his gift were thousands of seedlings, shrubs and trees, intended for street plantings and an afforestation scheme. Originally intended to be used as a children's playground and possibly for a bowling green, today the former site of the Chislehurst Nursery is Goodhew Park, often used for football matches and by dog walkers. Little remains of its association with a man prominent in business and public affairs in Goulburn other than its name.

Despite Arthur Goodhew's relative obscurity today, Goodhew's Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co was a major supplier of plants in the region and to Canberra from around 1900. Entrepreneurial by nature, Goodhew had a shop in Goulburn's Auburn Street, where he operated as a seedsman and florist, while promoting his Chislehurst Nursery in Victoria Street, then on the outskirts of the town. By August 1910 Goodhew was to advertise in the *Queanbeyan Age* that he was the only nurseryman in Goulburn, carrying an extensive stock of ornamental trees, shrubs, hedge plants, fruit trees and seeds (in fact, A Lansdowne & Sons, seedsman and plant merchants, were competitors to the Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co in Goulburn in the early 20th century).



## Arthur Goodhew

Goodhew was born in Kent. Chislehurst Nursery was named after his paternal grandfather who had run a nursery of the same name in England. Goodhew had five daughters, one of whom, Nell, assisted in running his florists for many years. Goodhew's nursery supplied cool climate, frost-resistant plants to the region by 1912, including elms, ashes, birches, poplars and rowans. The large number of trees supplied by Goulburn's nurseries to the Canberra region waned after 1915, once Charles Weston's nursery was established there.

Like many nursery businesses in Australia towards the end of the 19th century, the stock underwent dramatic changes in response to the adoption of gardenesque fashion. No longer restricted to growing plants purely for self-sufficiency, gardeners in the late Victorian era had access to new and increasing varieties of stock, which the Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co capitalised on. The company, along with many others at this time, produced an annual catalogue. By the 1920s, as Richard Aitken remarks in *Reading the modern garden 1917–71* (2013, p 53), nursery catalogues were 'bedecked with colour images of cheery annuals, relaxed terraces and bubbling pools surrounded the 'Ideal Home''. Few catalogues survive today, but the Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co produced catalogues from c1897 until the 1940s, which were eagerly sought after and regularly reviewed

by the local newspapers.

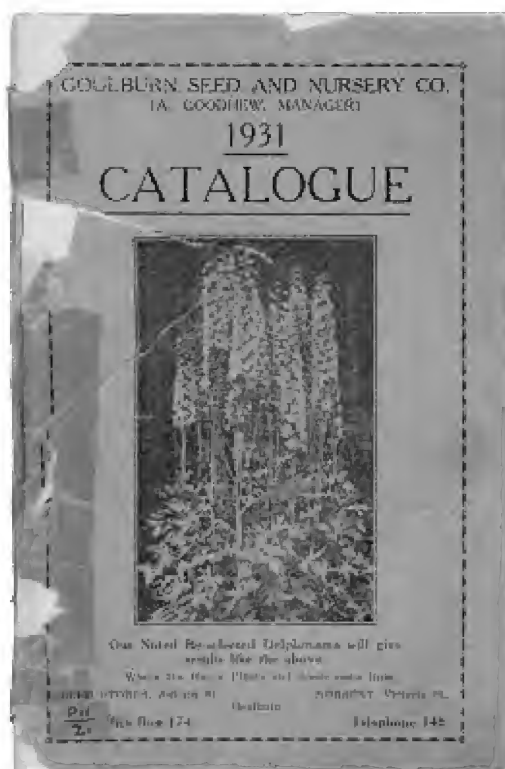
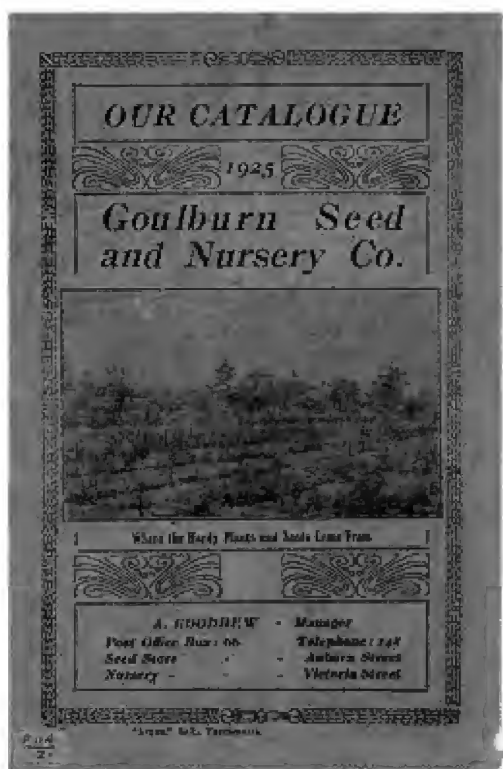
The 1899 catalogue was described in that year's *Goulburn Herald* (2 June, p 2) as containing 'illustrations of various kinds of vegetables notable among them being twelve onions grown from the company's seeds in the Goulburn district and weighing 30 lbs ... Three prizes of £2, £1 and 10/6 are offered for competition for this year for best grown onions'.

Subsequent catalogues were praised for their comprehensive information covering 'the garden, orchard and field', and included vegetable calendars which applied to 'districts similar to and around Goulburn'. By the 1920s Goodhew stocked ferns and pot plants and the catalogues incorporated cultural notes with remedies for insect pests. This continued during the 1930s when the catalogues were noted for their advice on when and how to plant flowers, vegetables and fruit trees.



Arthur W Goodhew (1864–1950), Alderman for the City of Goulburn, c1920s.

photo Goulburn and District Historical and Genealogical Society



Left and middle: Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co. catalogues for 1925 and 1931.

photos Goulburn and District Historical and Genealogical Society

Above: Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co. advertisement.

*Sydney Stock and Station Journal*, 16 June 1922, p 13

The Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co not only provided seeds and plants to the district but regularly exported and imported their stock. In 1909 the *Catholic Press* declared that the company 'send their trees, etc. as far as North Queensland', while importing seeds from around the world (17 June, p 24). Growing and supplying cool climate trees meant Chislehurst Nursery exported further afield with 'two orders this week ... from Northern India – Peshawar was one of the places written from where the climate is somewhat similar to that of Goulburn'. The nursery maintained horticultural trade with northwest India for many years, reported the *Young Chronicle* (27 April 1934, p 2), with consignments including lilacs dispatched overseas.

## Flower shows

Goodhew contributed to the Goulburn Horticultural Society's flower show for many decades. His 1931 entry aroused particular interest – 'a new shrub, *Fremontia Californica*, which provided a wealth of magnificent golden blooms. The shrub was grown from seed by Mr. Goodhew and is a rarity, so far as New South Wales is concerned'. He similarly exhibited and promoted the Irish strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*) during the 1920s, which he grew at Chislehurst Nursery, encouraging its culinary use by making jam with the berries. As a successful businessman, Goodhew utilised advertising to promote the Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co and was a regular participant and judge in local horticultural society displays, annual A, P & H (agricultural, pastoral and historical) shows and flower shows across New South Wales.

These events provided him with opportunities to introduce new plant species stocked and promote those which had become fashionable. In 1906

he exhibited 'cactus and show dahlias, liliun magnifica, roses and gladioli' at the Goulburn Horticultural Club, reflecting the large variety of trees, shrubs and flowers available to the Federation gardener. The inaugural Goulburn and District Industrial Exhibition held in 1909 attracted many participants. Goodhew's Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co entry was recognised for its 'tastefully arranged display of pot plants, fruit trees, manures, farm and garden implements, while spray also occupied a prominent position'.

In addition to managing the Goulburn Seed and Nursery Co and Chislehurst Nursery, Goodhew was involved in many public activities. He entered municipal life in 1916 and was elected Mayor of Goulburn in 1927–28 and again in 1944. He served on Council from 1925 until his accidental death in 1950, and was President of the local Scouts, the Hospital Board, Goulburn and District Ambulance, the local branch of the Prisoner's Aid Society of NSW, Secretary of the War Memorial Committee and patron and trustee of the Buffalo Club.

It is, however, his enthusiasm for and promotion of trees, gardens and parks through his commercial businesses and private interests that he is best known. During the 1920s to 1940s Goodhew was involved in supporting the development of parks in Goulburn and regularly donated plants and trees for this purpose.

His donation of the four acres of land in 1940, formerly Chislehurst Nursery and today Goodhew Park, reflects his horticultural influence on the town and region. The two weeping Japanese pagoda trees (*Sophora japonica pendula*), unusual and attractive specimen trees which he planted to mark a side entrance to the park, are the remains of this legacy.

Weeping Japanese pagoda trees at an entrance to Goodhew Park, Goulburn.  
photo Claire Baddeley



## Sources

Quotations from *Goulburn Evening Penny Post* unless otherwise attributed (27 March 1906 p 2, 20 May 1909 p 4, 18 May 1920 p 2, 23 July 1926 p 3, 17 November 1931 p 2, 10 May 1932 p 2, 27 April 1934 p 2, 25 October 1940 p 19, 18 July 1949 p 7).

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Steve Brown

## *Love and happiness in garden conservation*

Love and happiness can be the dominant emotions in the making and experience of gardens. They are emotional states that can involve an exchange of comfort, care and pleasure between gardens and those who create, care for and visit them. To what extent can such feelings for gardens be 'conserved' in the practice of heritage management?

### **Domestic gardens and national parks**

Domestic gardens located within national parks across Australia are a challenge for conservation management. Typically they are 'inherited' at the point when private properties are declared

as parks. The challenge of such legacies for park management extends across managing both natural and cultural heritage. For nature conservation, domestic gardens are framed as a threat, particularly where they comprise, but not necessarily contain, non-native and non-endemic plant species. For cultural heritage management, small-scale domestic gardens are seldom recognised as 'authorised' heritage (that is, listed on statutory registers) because they are typically valued by individuals, family groups and/or small friendship circles rather than by broader community or cultural groups.

As contested, often marginalised, spaces within both natural and cultural heritage fields, domestic gardens are ideal places to explore constructs of nature and culture, tangible

Brenda Weir at Bishop's Lodge, Hay, NSW, 1998.

Riverina Regional Tourism, courtesy of Nerida Reid



Left: Darcoola Station homestead and garden, November 2012.

Right: Darcoola Station homestead garden: geraniums, 2012.

photos Steve Brown



and intangible heritage, Indigenous and non-Indigenous attachments, native and endemic species, and official and unofficial heritage practices. And they are places of emotional experience in which love and loss, happiness and sadness are cultivated and implanted.

## Why happiness and love?

To ask ‘why happiness and love’ is to ask: why do people garden and spend time in gardens? At one level, gardening and garden visiting can have positive impacts on physical and mental health and well-being — greater life satisfaction, enhanced self-esteem, fewer feelings of depression and anxiety and improvement in moods, for example. Equally, gardens can have considerable and complex meanings and express something of people’s emotional lives — including pleasure, joy, happiness and love; emotions rarely encompassed or made visible in the work of heritage management, as Denis Byrne (2013) has noted. Gardens create sensory, affective experiences of intimacy, empathy and memory.

Affect is the experience of feeling or emotion. Scholar Sara Ahmed (2010) conceptualises affect as ‘sticky’ — it is ‘what sticks’ or connects values, ideas and objects. The importance of affect lies in its relationship with concepts of place-attachment and belonging. That is, the feelings

and connections that individuals and groups hold for special places, particular landscapes and significant objects (including plants), because of the experiences and encounters that have taken place within or with them. And with particular reference to gardens, the ways in which human—plant entanglements (or connections) are created is through affective encounters and through the experiences arising from everyday engagement.

Furthermore, gardens are constructed by, and construct, networks of people, plants and places. Individual plants become reminders of the people and places from which they were acquired; and gardens become settings for enacting friendships and seeking solace. Thus love and happiness can become the dominant emotions in the making and experience of gardens. They are emotional states that can involve an exchange of comfort, care and pleasure between people, plants and place.

## Darcoola Station homestead garden, NSW

Brenda Weir was passionate about her garden. She especially loved roses, particularly heritage varieties. These included Safrano, an early 19th century tea rose that had grown in her mother’s garden; and Tonner’s Fancy and Harbinger, two hybrid *gigantea* varieties thought to have been lost until Brenda and close friend Coleen Houston



identified them in a garden on Thelangerin Station in western New South Wales, Australia.

When Brenda passed away in 2002, she had planted over 200 rose varieties around the Darcoola Station homestead (now within Kalyarr National Park). While Brenda was unwell and after she died, friends from the nearby town of Hay and the surrounding district maintained the Darcoola garden. Coleen Houston told me, 'They did that garden for Brenda. It was in her memory.' People wanted to remember and celebrate Brenda through the garden. In heritage terms, the Darcoola Station garden was a place of cultural and spiritual value. It was a place of love and happiness, but also of great sadness.

The garden and home were established in 1922 on a treeless claypan adjoining Darcoola Creek. Large tree species were initially planted to buffer the house and garden against chilling winter winds and ameliorate the effects of summer heat and dust storms. Additionally, almond and apricot trees were planted, grape vines grew and draped the veranda and, in spring, sweet peas covered a trellis.

After Bob Weir and first wife Shirley took over the property in the 1940s, they extended the house, planted new trees in the orchard, and built a weld-mesh fence around the garden to exclude farm animals. Shirley established a lawn and planted geraniums (because they did not require much watering) and also planted roses. Brenda Weir described the 1960s front garden as 'very charming and serene'; and said that in wanting to change the design of this part of the garden she was 'always aware of a nice feeling about this area that must not be lost' (Weir 2002). From the late 1960s until the sale of the property to the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2002, Brenda and Bob Weir cared for both the garden and wider property.

Initially Brenda's concern was for the work of restoring and conserving the landscape of Darcoola Station. With a number of other local farming women who shared an interest in the land, Brenda established a group that ran field days on members' farms. The group's activities included tree-planting days and tours to inspect areas set aside for native vegetation regeneration. Nerida Reid, a friend of Brenda, recalled a number of field days on Darcoola. After a day's work, the women gathered in Brenda's garden 'to enjoy the peace and relief' after a day of tree planting. At such get-togethers cuttings were swapped, 'friendship gardens' expanded and, thereby, friendship networks nurtured.

After Brenda died in 2002, friends rallied to participate in working bees to maintain the Darcoola Station homestead garden. Friends and

family held public open days in Brenda's memory. The garden was material testimony to love, loss and celebration. Coleen was assured by the sight of an owl of Brenda's continued presence in the garden. Friends such as Coleen and Nerida had planted trees on the property, contributed plants to the homestead garden and taken cuttings from it. They with other volunteers tended the garden after Brenda passed away. Shirley's and Brenda's children grew up in the garden and knew it intimately. Many of the emotions of place-attachment experienced in, and the cultural and spiritual values attributed to, the Darcoola garden are intimate and personal. How can such 'personal heritage' be recognised and respected in the process of heritage management?

## Care and respect

The case example used here focuses on a place with important social and spiritual values (personal, familial and collective) that express powerful emotions, including happiness, love and loss. The Darcoola Station garden, once part of a privately owned sheep-raising property, now lies within a national park. For agencies managing homestead gardens such as Darcoola, the feelings associated with gardens are not readily apparent. To be 'seen' and understood, it is necessary to engage with past owners and their friends, as well as local people and communities. Where this does not happen, there are consequences for the wellbeing of humans and plants. I argue that managing the spirit and feeling of domestic gardens requires an ethics of care, recognition and respect in order to have benefits for short, medium and long-term support for landscape conservation and community wellbeing.

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This article draws on Steve's PhD research (2010–14) concerning place-attachment and domestic gardens. The thesis is available online at <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/15976>.



Sandra Kearney

## *Wensleydale and its garden*

Wensleydale and its  
restored garden, 2017.  
photo Sandra Kearney

The garden of Adelaide Hills property 'Wensleydale' in Stirling, near Mount Lofty railway station, has been carefully restored to its earlier glory by the present owners. As you travel along the main thoroughfare, the house's distinctive three-storey high tower suddenly comes into sight. With its castellated parapet and flagpole, the tower stands proud in the morning sunshine above the Hills heritage-listed wrought iron boundary fence softened with garden plants. A recent AGHS grant has helped to fund restoration of the garden's gazebo.

The house itself is a large residence constructed of random coursed stone finished with dressed stone quoins and surrounds. The land on which the house sits was acquired by real estate agent George Green in 1855. He purchased 35 acres on Sections 52 and 403 in the Hundred Noarlunga County of Adelaide for £176. The land was

portioned off and sold to market gardeners in the area before a five-acre section was purchased in 1883 by Captain Isaac Killicoat, an owner of copper mining leases in Burra. He gave the land to his sons William and Philip, who constructed the house and other buildings in 1885. It seems the house was used as a summer residence, allowing owners to escape the often-intense heat of the Adelaide plain. Soon after its construction, William became the sole owner of the property, later adding the tower and servants wing.

### **An early 20th century gazebo**

In 1904, Whitmore Blake Carr married the widow of Paul Bonnin who owned the property. Under the Carrs' ownership, the garden became a prominent feature in the hands of John Smith, a highly skilled Aldgate nurseryman. The gardens were originally laid out in the English style with pathways, stone steps and a Japanese tea-house: this was an era of low labour costs and prolific importation of new plants, particularly from

China and Japan. A Victorian gazebo installed in the garden near the house came out in kit form from England and was used as ship's ballast. In the early 1900s the garden was greatly admired and photographed by passengers on passing trains between Adelaide and Aldgate.

In 1939 Gresham Stobie Matthews purchased the residence (then known as 'Tena Kora') and it became a full-time residence for the first time. The Matthews family renamed it 'Balcarres', and converted the Victorian gazebo into an aviary befitting the grandeur of the garden they now owned. Although the staff of six soon diminished to one during World War 2, Syd Smith, a nephew of nurseryman John Smith, was retained to tend the gardens; he worked there until retirement in 1954.

The water supply was originally pumped from an old well near the railway line using a Tangye kerosene pump, which is still in its original housing within the garden. Other surviving garden structures include a gazetted public toilet and pit, a peacock house, a croquet lawn and almost one kilometre of hedges made up of *Prunus laurocerasus*, *Ligustrum ovalifolium* and *Buxus sempervirens*.

The original coach-house and outbuildings were located on three acres of the land separated from the house by Government Road (now Sturt Valley Rd). In the late 1950s this section of the property was sold off. By the 1960s, an ornate tessellated tiled glasshouse close to the



Postcard featuring Wensleydale, 1945.

State Library of South Australia, Stirling Collection

main residence, said to have housed one of the finest collections of ferns in the Adelaide Hills in its day, was demolished to make way for garages and parking. Remnants of the tiles and iron rods are still turned over in the flowerbeds today. The large rockery, a must in Victorian gardens, was also removed during this period.

The Weatherald family lived on the property from 1960 until 2000, renaming it 'Wensleydale' in memory of the Yorkshire birthplace of George Weatherald's grandfather. When they took ownership many of the original trees, such as *Ulmus glabra*, *Araucaria araucana* and a bottle shaped *Cupressus torulosa* were still in residence.

George Weatherald made a significant mark on the garden. It was not unknown for him to take to



Wensleydale's gazebo before (left) and after restoration.

photos Sandra Kearney

a high ladder for an entire day to trim and shape a beautiful Bhutan cypress; sadly, this was later removed by another owner, as was an original *Araucaria bidwillii*. George wanted to apply balance and restraint to the garden to create a palate of contrasting shapes using various shades of green. He also introduced 60 red-flowering 'Lili Marlene' roses and oriental persimmon alongside the ornate bridges, in anticipation of replicating the blaze of autumn colour experienced on his Asian garden trips. He added some low walls, a fountain to commemorate the bicentennial of the First Fleet's arrival, a tennis court, numerous rhododendrons, 40 maples and 50 camellias. A Stirling heritage survey in 1985 noted the property as a residence displaying historical, economic and social themes of great importance to the local district.

## Reinvigoration

Wensleydale had fallen into a state of deterioration when Ian and Janie Smylie happened upon the deceased estate in 2002. They felt the house had been waiting for them to find it; their determination and efforts have restored the century-old house and its garden. They have worked tirelessly on restoring the tower and on stabilising the balcony to the rear of the house, removing ivy that threatened to smother the now restored ornate iron rails. From this location a sweeping view takes in the picturesque garden as it slopes away from the house down to a tributary of the Sturt Creek. The creek itself is spanned by four small Japanese-style red bridges installed by George Weatherald who was inspired by a garden trip, in this instance to China.

The Smylies have introduced many new trees and plants, including 150 camellias, more than 200 rhododendrons, and more than 100 maples. The garden holds *Magnolia grandiflora*, *Quercus robur*, *Quercus palustris*, *Phoenix canariensis*, *Fraxinus ornus*, *Araucaria heterophylla*, *Cedrus atlantica*, *Picea abies*, *Ulmus glabra pendula*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Arbutus* sp., and *Fagus sylvatica purpurea*.

The latest restoration work was completed in January 2018 with the aid of a grant from the Australian Garden History Society. This grant went towards restoring and preserving the garden's magnificent gazebo. The gazebo was restored by local craftsman Karel Jansen (who describes the project as 'the pinnacle of his career'). Jansen repaired and replaced the old oregon timber of the structure before painting and waterproofing it; there were minor repairs to the red tin roof and its wooden running trims.

## 'Constant attention to order, regularity and neatness'

In 1871 in *The South Australian vigneron and gardener's manual*, George McEwin wrote:

*A well-conducted garden is one in which constant attention to order, regularity and neatness will be required from him who undertakes the management of order to the due performance of every operation in the proper season, and in the best popular manner. Slovenly people can never have a good garden because they are opposed to all rules of order and cleanliness.*

The Smylies have faced enormous challenges in the restoration of the house and the garden. The result is the rescuing of this outstanding property from certain dilapidation. Like previous owners, the present ones have undertaken planting for the benefit of future generations. They consider themselves caretakers of this very special place, yet they are so much more in this historic landmark of the Adelaide Hills.

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**Sandra Kearney** is a member of her local historical society where her passion for gardening and garden history is sustained with gems such as Wensleydale. She previously studied horticulture with plantsmanship at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Scotland where she also gained a diploma in garden history. She is now completing a BA (Hons) in history at Flinders University.





Tim Gatehouse

## *Derriweit Heights, Mount Macedon*

Like their contemporaries in India who escaped the summer heat by retreating to hill stations, many 19th century Australian colonists with the means to do so established summer homes in mountain areas close to the capital cities. Amongst these retreats was Mount Macedon, 65 kilometres northwest of Melbourne. Rising steeply from the surrounding plains to a height of 1000 metres above sea level, with cool temperatures, rich soil and abundant rainfall, Mount Macedon by the 1870s had become a favoured location for dedicated gardeners.

### Charles and Marian Ryan

Amongst the first were Charles and Marian Ryan. Charles Ryan (1818–98), the son of a solicitor from Kilfera, Ireland, emigrated to New South Wales in 1839. After overlanding cattle to Victoria

he established Kilfera Station on the Broken River near Benalla, and later Killeen Station near Longwood. In 1846 he married Marian Cotton (1828–1914), a daughter of John Cotton (1802–49) of Doogalook Station on the Goulburn River. John Cotton was an accomplished ornithologist and artist, and had published two books on British birds illustrated with his own paintings before emigrating. His premature death prevented the publication of a further volume on the birds of Port Phillip, although it was published by his descendants in 1974, illustrated by the paintings he had prepared. A fascination with the natural world manifested itself in later generations of the family. Another of Cotton's daughters, Caroline, married Albert Le Souef who, with three of his sons, became directors of Australian zoos.

In 1854 Ryan moved to Melbourne and established the stock and station agency Ryan and Hammond, living at Brighton and later at Richmond. In 1873 he gave up active management of the firm and devoted his energies

Mr Ryan's [Victoria], 'Darraweit, Mount Macedon', 1882.

State Library of Victoria, Cogger album



Charles Ryan (1818–98)  
photo Thomas Foster  
Chuck.  
State Library of Victoria

to the creation of his garden at Mount Macedon. Named Derriweit Heights (meaning place of the frogs, and variously spelt during the property's lifetime), it was ideally situated for the cultivation of temperate plants. Its elevation of 600 metres gave it cooler temperatures and a higher rainfall than Melbourne, but without the climatic rigours of higher altitudes.

## Designing the garden

With the addition of adjacent areas of land, by the 1880s Derriweit comprised nearly 30 acres. The house was sited at the highest point close to the northern boundary, commanding a view which extended to Port Phillip Bay. Built of brick with a slate roof, the long, low house was sited on a shelf cut into the hillside. Steep gables gave it a slightly Gothic appearance. Long windows opened onto the south verandah, edged with an iron balustrade of a suitably rustic pattern of twisted boughs.

The layout of the garden was governed by a small stream originating in a spring which rose within the northwest boundary of the property.

From here it flowed through the garden, feeding five descending lakes which reflected the banked rhododendrons and azaleas planted around their edges. Some large native trees like blackbutts and blue gums were retained, as well as mature tree ferns. The cleared areas were planted with a variety of trees and shrubs from temperate climates, in garden beds or as individual specimens in the sweeping lawns. These included examples of sequoia, swamp cypress, oak, poplar and Irish strawberry trees and the American smoke bush. All flourished in the moist cool climate of the mountainside, as did a grove of Japanese maples and a gully planted with exotic ferns. Water lilies grew in profusion in the lakes, and fruit on the heavily laden trees in the orchard.

Whether there was ever a master plan for the Derriweit garden is not known, nor has a designer been specifically identified. Lady Maie Casey, Charles and Marian Ryan's granddaughter, has written that it was planned in consultation with William Guilfoyle, director of the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and principally responsible for their present layout. Guilfoyle also designed private gardens, but Derriweit is not among those usually attributed to him. Furthermore, he did not arrive in Victoria until mid-1873, when work on Derriweit would have already commenced. Taylor and Sangster had been nurserymen and garden designers in Melbourne since the 1850s, but did not open their branch at Macedon until 1875. Baron von Mueller, the first director of



Mr Ryan's [Victoria],  
'Darraweit, Mount  
Macedon', 1882.

State Library of Victoria,  
Cogger album

the Botanic Gardens before being replaced by Guilfoyle, was a friend of the Ryan family, but regarded botany from a scientific rather than aesthetic viewpoint.

In all likelihood, the inspiration for Derriweit's design was that of Charles and Marian Ryan. A garden of this size and scope would have taken years to evolve, and been the result of attempts in the acclimatisation of species new to this country, with varying degrees of success. The development of the garden had to be continually adapted to the differing results of these experiments. The sharing of knowledge amongst the gardening fraternity was particularly pronounced in the 19th century, a period of intense curiosity about the plants of the new world, and the practicalities of introducing those of the old. In the Derriweit garden with its sinuously shaped garden beds and lakes, great swathes of lawn and specimen trees, it was possible to detect the hand of Guilfoyle. His advice, plants, seeds and cuttings, and those of other professional and amateur botanists and gardeners, must all have contributed to what was regarded by the 1880s as one of Victoria's horticultural gems.

## The garden matures

As Derriweit's reputation grew, so did the number of travellers, local and international, who visited it. Among these was Admiral Lord Charles Scott, commander of the ship carrying the future George V and Duke of Clarence on

their world tour. While in Melbourne he visited Derriweit, and was attracted not only to the garden, but also to the Ryans' daughter Ada, whom he subsequently married.

In 1886 the English writer James Anthony Froude visited Mount Macedon on his tour of Australasia. In his book *Oceana* he wrote of Derriweit:

*Having the colonial passion for gardening and the means for indulging it, Mr. Ryan has created what in England would be a show place for its beauty and curiosity. Tropical plants will not of course grow there, but all else seems to grow: there is scarcely a rare flower belonging to the temperate regions of any part of the world of which he has not a specimen.*

Vice-regal guests also became frequent visitors to Derriweit after 1886 when the government purchased the adjoining property Rosenheim from David Syme as a retreat for the governor, renaming it Government Cottage.

## Decline

The prosperity of the land boom gave way to the devastating depression of the 1890s. Charles Ryan's financial position declined severely, and in 1898 he was forced to sell Derriweit. The purchaser was Thomas Allan, the manager of an insurance company, who used it as a holiday house. The Ryans moved to the cottage formerly occupied



Derriweit from the garden, January 1910.

Victor Albert Nelson  
Hood 1862–1929,  
compiler;  
State Library of Victoria

by George Graham, head gardener at Derriweit. Extended by another storey, with bay windows and verandahs, the cottage came to resemble a smaller version of their old home. The ten acres surrounding it in time developed into an attractive garden, using seeds and cuttings from Derriweit, but without its grandeur, which could never be emulated.

Charles Ryan survived the move to the cottage for only six months, but Marian lived there until her death in 1914, with her daughters Blanche and Mabel Ryan and Ellis Rowan, the renowned flower painter. Ellis evidently inherited the artistic talent of her grandfather John Cotton, and shared a passion for natural history with her Le Souef cousins. A largely self-taught artist, her skills were honed in the garden at Derriweit, with the encouragement of Baron von Mueller, for whom she collected plants for classification. Her travels in search of rare species to paint took her as far afield as the New Guinea Highlands.

Top: Mount Macedon  
Derriweit, c1974.

Bottom: The ruins  
of Darreweit  
[24 April 1983], after  
the Ash Wednesday  
bushfires of  
February 1983.

JT Collins collection,  
La Trobe Picture  
Collection, State  
Library of Victoria



In 1906 Derriweit underwent a major transformation when it was sold to Neville Buckley, a son of Mars Buckley, founder of the eponymous Bourke Street store. Buckley already owned Narrapumelap Station in the Western District and Rock House at Kyneton. He engaged architect John Beswicke to add a second storey, transforming the Ryans' discreet house into a striking example of the fashionable Queen Anne style, with steep terracotta tiled roofs, diamond-paned bay windows and walls covered in faux half-timbering. In 1912 it was sold to Riverina graziers George and Lily Landale, who used it as a summer retreat. Lily Landale, a daughter of Sir William and Janet Lady Clarke, was a great-niece of Charles and Marian Ryan.

After several more short-term owners under whom the garden sank into neglect, Derriweit in 1969 suffered the same fate as other historic Macedon properties by being subdivided, the land around the house being reduced to two acres. One later owner, Beatrice Falkiner, was also a distant relative of the Ryans. In February 1983, when it was again for sale, the extravagantly renovated house was gutted in the Ash Wednesday bushfires. The gaunt ruin was demolished and replaced by a succession of short-lived houses, designed to take advantage of the view. Today, all that remains of the Ryans' Derriweit in the current house on the site is the original service wing, and several trees in its reduced garden and those of neighboring properties carved from it.

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Glenn R Cooke

## *Subtropic baroque: a Queensland palm garden*

When we visit a garden our expectations are influenced by its location – the plantings will be largely dependent on the climate – as well as by the scale (is it a city or a rural garden?) and by what we know of the owners. Sometimes these expectations can be totally confounded, as mine were on a visit to the palm garden of Dr Paul and Helen Cotton at Tinana outside Maryborough.

Some years ago I went with a fellow AGHS Queensland branch member, Adelene Walker, to see this garden. We both expected to see a palm garden — one with a diverse collection of palm species such as those which featured

in Queensland's Open Garden Scheme, or the touristy cliché of coconut palms in coastal resorts. But at the end of a long and steep driveway bordered with an avenue of densely planted golden cane palms, we discovered a 10-acre garden composed of palms ... some five thousand specimens, in fact!

### **Palms as exotica**

Palms have always been a signifier of the exotic for Europeans, from the date palms and oases in the tales of the Arabian Nights, to those in the tropical jungles of 'darkest Africa' or the coconut-palm fringed shores of tropical Pacific islands. The closest palm to the imaginings of the British is the Mediterranean fan palm *Chamaerops humilis* — the only native European species of palm.

View towards the palm-rimmed pond in the Cotton garden at Tinana, outside Maryborough, Queensland. Heavy planting and the strong contrast between light and shade are distinctive features of tropical gardens.

all photos Glenn R Cooke



Left: Carved stone seat and sculptures with an elevated water feature.

Right: View from the pool area to the Mary River. The philodendrons clamber up a wire framework.



During the 19th century, wealthy plant collectors promoted plant hunting expeditions to remote corners of the globe and built large stove-houses to nurture the tropical rarities brought back to impress their peers and challenge their competitors. Palms were a notable part of these trophies. More than 90% of the 2700 species of palms are tropical — from the ubiquitous *Kentia* palm (*Howea forsteriana*, endemic to Lord Howe Island) which decorated thousands of Victorian parlours, to the array of species housed in the great Palm House of Kew Gardens.

The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew were opened to the public in 1841, and developed into a leading scientific institution. To cater for the burgeoning enthusiasm for palms, Kew's Palm House was built by architect Decimus Burton and iron-maker Richard Turner between 1844 and 1848. It was the first large-scale structural use of wrought iron, and became the inspiration for the key building of Britain's 1851 Great Exhibition — in common parlance, the Crystal Palace.

## Palm cultivation in Australia

In Australia the situation was not dissimilar. Palms from all parts of the world made their way to acclimatisation gardens where their development potential could be explored, and to botanic gardens as rare, curious and beautiful plants. Australia had the additional advantage of being able to include palms of its own. However, even within Australia's generally benign climate, the diverse range of climatic zones means that coastal areas in southern states need glasshouses in order to nurture tropical plant collections.

The success of the Victoria House, a glasshouse constructed especially for the giant Victoria waterlily (*Victoria amazonica*) from tropical South

America at the Adelaide Botanic Gardens in 1868, saw a glasshouse imported from Bremen in Germany in 1875 which became the first dedicated palm house in Australia. It was opened to the public two years later.

The prefabricated Adelaide palm house is thought to be the only extant example of its type in the world. It was designed by German architect Gustav Runge. The sophisticated engineering techniques used in its construction made it a benchmark in glasshouse design, and Adelaide's dry climate helped in its preservation. Following a complete restoration in 1994–95, it now features a display of flora from Madagascan arid zones.

## An extraordinary Queensland palm garden

During the first half of the 20th century palms fell out of fashion but by the 1960s specialist palm nurseries and collector groups formed. Helen and Paul met when they were based at Uluru. Stark and beautiful though the landscape in central Australia may be, they decided when they married to live in a kinder climate where the landscape was dominated by green. They settled on Maryborough in southeastern Queensland, where Paul established his medical practice and purchased a 30-acre property at Tinana on the banks of the Mary River.

The house (the core of which dates back 120 years) was moved to the site in the late 1950s and is now hidden amid a framework of exotic trees. A large tipuana tree shades the area nearest the house which features carved stone water troughs. A large raised pond filled with lilies and rushes dominates the adjoining lawn, and on the other side tennis courts and large pool to escape humid summer days were built.



## Beginning the collection

Helen admits their remarkable garden started ‘in ignorance’. The couple thought they would like to plant some palms and bought a bag of mixed-palm seeds for \$100 which included alexander, royal, bangalow, golden cane and Chinese fan palms. The germination rate was phenomenal. They planted the palm seedlings into small pots then increasingly larger pots as they grew. They planted some of the palms in select positions through the garden and thought that they might start up a business by marketing advanced palms, and set out the bulk of the palms out in rows. But they grew irritated with the regimented view and as they found other positions in their garden, moved them out. Helen then began to plant the palms out to form defined rooms.

The structure of their garden was adapted from the inherited landscape and the small collection of exotics (including poincianas and the tipuanas) already in situ. Hardy bromeliads have been liberally planted along the perimeters and as understorey plants.

Paul has acquired a collection of small-scale earthmoving ‘boy’s toys’ which provides him with a welcome distraction from the demands of his patients. Helen admires the sensitivity with which Paul excavated and shaped the garden, whose plantings and maintenance have been Helen’s responsibility. Her most appreciated gift was several tons of rocks from the local quarry to edge and define garden plots.

Helen created a large open dome with a supply of steel reinforcing rods on which hanging baskets of hardy plants survive with only occasional watering. The weight of the hanging baskets helps stabilise the structure.

Most of the garden’s palms are not treated as individual specimens. The exception is at the front

of the house where a row of queen palms defines the edge of the pond on the cascade lawn. This provides one of the key water elements as do several dams, but the principal water feature is at the back of the house — the Mary River itself. Here the river has a broad expanse because of a barrage slightly downstream which also ensures that the water in the river is fresh. The view from the gazebo reveals the land sloping down to the riverbank. This area is flood prone, so it is largely untouched — grass is simply mown around the original gum trees. In a sense the massing of palms planted everywhere in the garden is replaced with the randomness of the Australian bush. Welcome Creek, which is a branch of the Mary River, also defines one of the boundaries of the garden.

## The baroque element

The garden described so far would certainly be of interest but not exceptional. The final touch was added after Paul attended a trade fair on a visit to Shanghai. Large-scale sculptures and urns were placed around the garden including a circular temple composed of caryatid figures which sit on a platform cut to form a terrace above Welcome Creek — it is an unexpected classical intrusion into the view of the rather scruffy Australian bush. The exaggerated scale of these various sculptural elements adds a surprising and spectacular touch, suggesting the description of the garden as ‘baroque’. The garden, a truly original creation, can be seen as an organic response to the varying demands of position, planting and placing

Left: Cast-iron posts at the entrance to the house yard, with an overscale crouching figure of Eros beyond. Large sculptures of lions flank the steps.

Right: A huge metal urn is silhouetted against the insistent verticals of the palm trunks.

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**Glenn R Cooke** was appointed as the first curator of decorative arts at the Queensland Art Gallery in 1981. He retired as research curator, Queensland Heritage, in 2013. He has published extensively on aspects of the fine and decorative arts and has been actively involved in AGHS since 1995. Glenn is an enthusiastic collector, gardener and ballroom dancer.



John Viska

## Rare ephemera on Woodbridge nursery

Woodbridge House, Guildford, c1890s, during Harper's occupation of the house.  
Museum of Perth

Very little ephemera of the early nurseries of Western Australia has survived. The author's discovery of some rare nursery ephemera – a 1908 catalogue, a nursery order form and a 1911 postcard – provides insight into the operation of one of the state's former horticultural enterprises.

### Charles Harper and Woodbridge

This story follows a 2016 talk by the author on Charles Harper and his association with the nursery and fruit growing industry. The talk to members and friends of the WA branch of AGHS and the National Trust of Australia (WA) Woodbridge House Volunteers was given in historic Woodbridge itself. (AGHS members who attended the AGHS 2005 national conference in Perth may remember visiting Harper's property near Guildford, in which he lived for almost 40 years.)

Illustrations from 19th century fruit culture manuals explained various propagation techniques used in the nursery. One delighted member of the audience remarked that the address on the 1911

postcard shown in the talk was her grandparents' address. The property she mentioned, extant in an outer suburb of Perth today, might still contain some fruit trees from the nursery.

Western Australia-born Charles Harper (1842–1912) was a pastoralist, inventor, newspaper owner (of the *Western Australian Times*, *West Australian* and *Western Mail*), parliamentarian, breeder and explorer. In 1861 he joined the search for pastoral land in the Yilgarn district of Western Australia, where he made botanical and geological observations, supplying Ferdinand von Mueller with botanical specimens. Harper's name is commemorated in *Harperia*, a genus of rush-like flowering plants endemic to Western Australia, as well as in the rare shrub *Tetratheca harperi* of the Yilgarn district, which Harper collected and von Mueller named. He is the subject of FR Mercer's 1958 book *The Life of Charles Harper of "Woodbridge"*.

### Supplying the state

Harper took possession of his newly built substantial two-storey residence 'Woodbridge' at Guildford



(on the northeast of Perth) in 1885. Planting of its orchards and vineyards had begun two years before, on land which was formerly part of Sir James Stirling's country estate. Within a few years, Western Australia's rapid population increase after the discovery of gold in the 1890s meant that the need to produce more food provided a great stimulus to the nursery and fruit growing industries.

Harper hired Thomas Price from South Australia as a propagator in 1894, and the two men went into partnership as the Harper and Price Nursery. In 1899 Price left to establish the Illawarra Orchard in the agricultural area of Karragullen, now suburban Perth. Price's reminiscences included the Harper children helping in the orchard and nursery during that time.

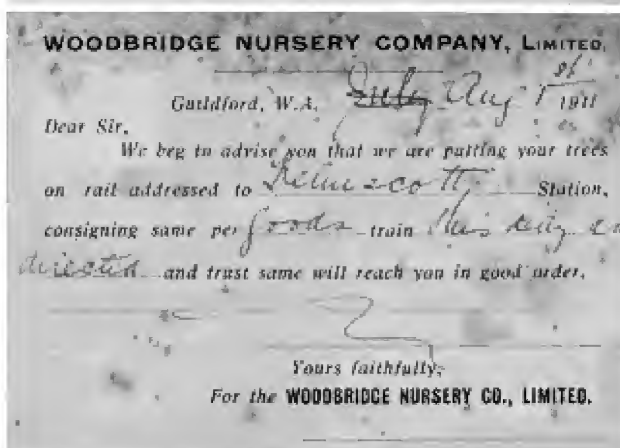
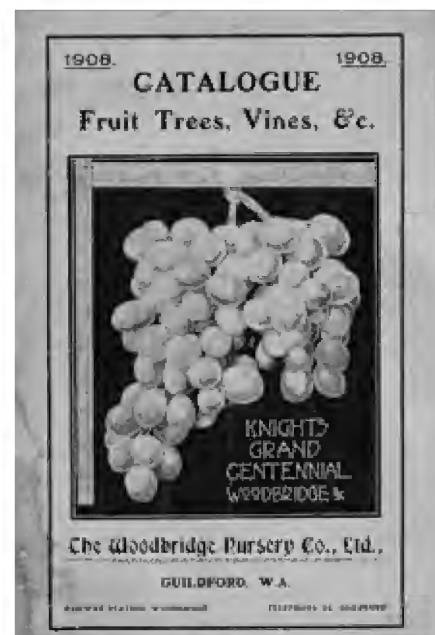
After Price's departure, Harper's business was renamed the Woodbridge Nursery Company. A late 1890s catalogue offered, among other trees, 62 apples including the Australian varieties Bismark and Dunn's Seedling. A 1908 catalogue from Woodbridge Nursery Company had a wide range of fruit trees, roses and ornamental trees which the nursery supplied to developing orchards and gardens in Western Australia.

Woodbridge Nursery operated until 1917, when both orchard and nursery were under water for six weeks during severe flooding in the Guildford area. The decision was made to end the commercial venture; the trees were uprooted and used for firewood. Today the location of the nursery is in the grounds of Guildford Grammar School.

## The historic house today

Today Woodbridge is a National Trust (WA) property. The family's cutlery, finger bowls and dessert set on display in the dining room, and kitchen items such as the family's cast-iron preserving pan used for stewing and jam-making with the orchard's fruit show that the Harpers could entertain on a grand scale. Books such as *Mrs Beeton's book of household management*, first published in 1861, show the importance of presentation of fruit in households like this one.

The National Trust has not yet taken advantage of the opportunity to interpret the fascinating past of Harper's nursery and fruit-growing enterprise. This could be done through displays of period gardening tools, paraphernalia, fruit-growing publications, and descriptions of cultural methods and techniques that visitors to historic properties enjoy discovering.



### Further reading

Carol Mansfield (Sept 2005) 'Gentleman's Park', *Australian Garden History* 17(2): 3–5.

Eric T Price (1985) *Thomas Price of Illawarra*. ET Price [Blackwood, SA].

Descriptive catalogues of the *Woodbridge Nursery Company*, 1894, 1908.

**John Viska** is the Chairman of AGHS's Western Australian branch. He was the conference coordinator for the 2014 AGHS national conference in Albany, WA.

Above left: Charles Harper; c1897, photographer unknown.

source WB Kimberly (compiler) (1897) *History of West Australia: a narrative of her past, together with biographies of her leading men*. FWW Niven, Melbourne, via Wiki Commons

Above right: 1908 Woodbridge Nursery catalogue. author's collection

Opposite: A rare nursery postcard, informing the addressee of the date on which an order would be delivered and the name of the nearest railway station or siding. Stock was grown in-ground, dug during the dormant season and dispatched in the autumn/winter period. Charles Harper took advantage of the new railway infrastructure developed by the Forrest government with the primary purpose of transporting agricultural and horticultural products throughout the state. author's collection



Anne Cochrane

## *Diamond Botanical Gardens, Saint Lucia*

Paths shaded with lush tropical flora make for cool walking in St Lucia's Diamond Botanical Gardens. all photos Anne Cochrane

With a conference to attend in Colombia at Cartagena on the Caribbean coast, the idea of a post-conference island-hopping holiday in the region sounded good. The Caribbean is a long way from Australia, so I wanted to make the most of my self-funded conference travel. After living and gardening in southwestern Western Australia with its Mediterranean climate for the past 25 years, visiting the tropical gardens of the Caribbean was a real treat. One of the best parts was a richly colourful botanic garden on Saint Lucia, that had the ability to captivate visitors for many hours.

Saint Lucia is one of the Windward Islands and part of the Lesser Antilles of the Eastern

Caribbean. It is a tropical island moderated by the northeastern trade winds. The French were the first European settlers to the island and officially claimed it in 1635; they were not, however, the first inhabitants, who were the native Carib Indians (the Caribbean takes its name from these early Indians of the region). For more than 150 years, the English and the French contested ownership of this small island until in 1814, at the close of the Napoleonic Wars, Saint Lucia became a colony of Britain. In 1979, the colony was granted independence.

### **A garden with mineral baths**

The Diamond Botanical Gardens (also known as the St Lucia Botanical Gardens), including mineral baths and waterfall, were once a portion of the 2000 acres of land granted to the Devaux



The mineral baths of Diamond Botanical Gardens.

Diamond Falls River, which runs through the Gardens

Hummingbird on a red flower of the torch ginger, *Etlingera elatior*.

The spectacularly coloured caterpillar of the frangipani hornworm, a native of the tropical and subtropical Americas.

Crotons and heliconias abound in the Gardens.

The golden chalice vine of Mexico and Central America.



brothers by King Louis XIV of France in 1713 in recognition of their services to France. It is claimed that the Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, bathed in the original mineral baths as a child. The baths were restored in 1928 after destruction in the late 1790s during the French Revolution, and in 1983 Joan Devaux, a descendent of the original Devaux family, became manager of the property and began designing and restoring the gardens.

The mineral baths, which are located within the Diamond Botanical Gardens, were built in 1784 for the troops of King Louis XVI so they could benefit from the therapeutic waters. Sulphur springs that originate from the dormant Soufriere volcano some 3 km upstream feed the Diamond Falls River, running through the gardens and into the baths. The river contains sulphur, iron, copper and manganese and the river has the ability to change colour on a daily basis depending on the concentration of each of the chemical elements. The mineral baths are still functioning to this day and are open to the public for a small fee.

## Tropical vegetation and wildlife

Despite the hot humid weather, walking through the gardens is a pleasure. Most of the paths are shaded by a thick tropical kaleidoscope of vegetation and towering trees. This vegetation harbours a myriad of small lizards and colourful insects such as red dragonflies and one of the most beautiful caterpillars I have ever seen.

Readers from tropical and subtropical climates of Australia would be familiar with many of the plants featured in these amazing gardens. There are excellent examples of *Anthurium* lilies, *Begonia*, *Croton* and *Heliconia* (lobster claw). The lattermost plant is considered to be exclusively pollinated by one of the smallest birds on the planet, the hummingbird. These colourful fast-moving birds flit from flower to flower, almost faster than the eye can see, and certainly faster than my camera shutter. Their beating wings ‘hum’ as they hover over flowers to feed on nectar. Today, the gardens are designated as a bird sanctuary and they have provided some information on the birds of St Lucia on interpretive signs.

The gardens also display some wonderful examples of the economic plants that are supported in this tropical environment: bananas, cocoa, nutmeg and other food crops, with accompanying signage interpreting their origins

and uses. Signage also educates the visitor on some not quite so well known properties of a variety of other plant species, for example one that has been introduced into a liqueur called ‘Seventh Heaven’. According to West Indian folklore, the bark of the native tree *Richeria grandis* is a famous Caribbean aphrodisiac and in case you are interested, this liqueur can be purchased at the delightful little shop within the gardens.

Hidden away in a corner of the gardens we found an old aqueduct or canal system that was built in 1765 to carry water from the river to a large waterwheel. We didn’t see the waterwheel, and it may no longer exist, but it was used to power machinery which crushed sugar cane, then later for extracting lime juice and oil. The waterwheel was apparently used more recently to generate the first electricity for the town of Soufriere.

The gardens provide a wealth of assorted information through interpretive signage. Explanations such as the benefits of creating nitrogen-rich compost from fallen leaves that can be added to the topsoil, and the gardens’ use of husks from the coconut fruit that lightens the soil but does not change the pH when broken down, add to the feeling that natural processes are very important in the ecosystem of the gardens.

A sign close to the entrance of Diamond Botanical Gardens informed us that the gardens were recovering from Hurricane Tomas, a category 2 hurricane that hit the island in October 2010, destroying trees and paths and dumping 50 inches of rain within a 24-hour period. I am sure that the use of mulching has hastened the gardens’ recovery. However, as I write this piece in mid-2017 I am wondering whether Hurricane Harvey, the category 5 hurricane that has just devastated parts of Texas, had any impact on these beautiful gardens. I truly hope not.

This lovely botanic gardens is a must if you are visiting the island of Saint Lucia. It is a peaceful slice of the tropics.

---

**Dr Anne Cochran** is recently retired, having been a research scientist working widely on conservation of seed from rare, threatened and poorly known native plant species of Western Australia. She continues to be involved in the publication of seed science research.



## Booking details for 2018 Southern Highlands conference and tours

We will be sending out the registration and accommodation assistance forms in two ways – by post in late May if we do not have your current email address, and by email on Thursday 7 June 2018 if we do. Electronic bookings through [www.trybooking.com/TTFK](http://www.trybooking.com/TTFK) will open on 7 June and postal bookings will also be processed from that day, including pre-conference and post-conference tours with Trisha Dixon. These identical 3 day/2 night tours will look at historic gardens, houses and landscapes in the Goulburn and Taralga district, with its links to writers Miles Franklin, Dame Mary Gilmore and Beatrice Bligh, as well as the great pioneering wool story of Eliza Forlonge, also strongly linked with the central Victorian town of Euroa.

One tour will be run before the conference:

- Monday 22 October to Wednesday 24 October 2018, and one after;
- Tuesday 30 October to Thursday 1 November 2018.



Les Musgrave's spectacular garden 'The Kaya' at Wildes Meadow, venue for the concluding conference function at the end of Monday 29 October's optional day.  
photo Les Musgrave

## New Zealand's South Island AGHS tour

Wednesday 31 October – Wednesday 14 November 2018\*

Last year's post-conference tour to the south of NZ's South Island was such a success that AGHS's Lynne Walker is offering a similar tour of her favourite NZ gardens in October–November 2018, after AGHS's national conference in the Southern Highlands.

The 2018 tour starts at Christchurch. It includes the Canterbury and Otago regions, Akaroa on the Banks Peninsula, high-country gardens on the foothills of snow-topped Mt Hutt, Dunedin's coastal gardens, Central Otago and Lake

Wanaka, and ends at Queenstown in the Southern Alps.

'We will see a truly exceptional range of gardens, with owners who are very welcoming and knowledgeable', Lynne says. 'The food and wine are first-class – and the scenery isn't bad either'.

\* Tour dates to be confirmed; complete itinerary available in mid-May.



Alphaburn Station at Wanaka.  
photo Lynne Walker

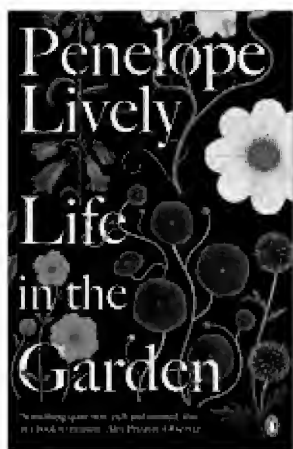
## Congratulations to Jeanne Villani OAM

We are delighted to record an Australia Day award to long-standing AGHS member Jeanne Villani. Jeanne received an Honorary OAM in January 2018 for her service to the preservation of heritage gardens. Among other achievements, Jeanne compiled the Sydney branch newsletter for years. Her former home of Waterfall Cottage in Bayview, Sydney, was heritage listed by the Northern Beaches Council in 2014.

Our warmest congratulations to Jeanne!

# For the bookshelf

Penelope Lively (2017) *Life in the garden*  
Penguin Australia, 208 pp, hardcover \$35, paperback  
(June 2018) pre-order \$22.99, ebook available.



Full disclosure: I am a long-standing fan of Penelope Lively and once had dinner with her! (Several decades ago!)

After 23 works of fiction and 4 great works of non-fiction, Penelope Lively has turned her inquiring mind and great literary skills to thinking and writing about what writers say about gardens. She deals with what she calls 'gardener writers' as distinct from 'garden writers'.

By this she means writers and other artists like Virginia Wolfe and Beatrix Potter, Claude Monet and Edvard Munch.

She reaches into their works to try to determine whether they actually had 'dirt under their fingernails', or whether they were – in one case she describes – simply describing plants from a catalogue list! She is sceptical about Rudyard Kipling ever having picked up a garden implement (though his wife may have), even though he wrote:

You'll find the tool and potting-sheds which are the heart of all.

The Cold-frames and the hot-houses, the dung pits and the tanks

The roller, carts and drain-pipes with the barrows and the planks.

But she teases apart the works of Willa Cather, TS Eliot and Pierre Bonnard to see if they really knew the gardens they write or paint about.

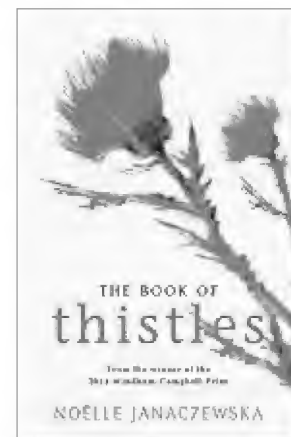
A totally engaging read for those who love gardens and books!

**Max Bourke AM** is a former deputy chair of AGHS with agricultural science training and a career in the arts and heritage.

Noëlle Janaczewska (2017) *The book of thistles*  
UWA Publishing, 304 pp, paperback \$24.99

Described in the publisher's blurb as 'part accidental memoir, part environmental history and part exploration of the performative voice on the page...', *The book of thistles* is a very personal book. Its start and finish, where Janaczewska lays open some of her childhood memories and family experiences, were where I found her writing strongest. Throughout the book, the action switches from present day to past – often very effectively, but sometimes too abruptly.

The author's done her homework – in the early (British) section, many of the big names in plant nomenclature and British landscape ecology appear. Her hunt for the melancholy thistle in the field (flesh?) – while unsuccessful – demonstrated how powerful it is to actually be in a landscape, where you might see and experience all other kinds of things that you may not have been looking for.



This book will introduce you to a range of thistly weeds, or weedy thistles, that you likely won't have heard of, and to other unanticipated pleasures. John Parkinson's 1640 book *Theatrum botanicum* (*Theatre of plants*) is one of them.

And *Rhaponticum australe* (the austral cornflower or native thistle) is my new bonus plant – an Australian perennial thistle species listed as vulnerable that, on internet searching, looks to have considerable horticultural merit with its tall scapes, and interestingly dissected grey-green foliage.

Some of the pieces in this book will probably trigger you to go and find out more about some of the plants and the public (and not so public) figures that Janaczewska describes.

The author's struggles to track the identity of plants resonated with me – the 'one step forward, two steps back' experience is common to most of us trying to identify an uncommon plant. In this context it's surprising that she resists using botanical (Latin) names, claiming that 'Latin isn't always the guarantee of precision and consistency we assume' (p 44). Botanical names enable anyone to follow a pathway to any plant. This contrasts oddly in relation to her comment (p 117) that vernacular names offer a limited number of words to describe so many different species.

The inclusion of an index would have added value. There are so many plant species (identified primarily by common names) and individuals introduced that the only way to backtrack to items of interest is to flick through the entire book. Images would have also been a bonus. My picky editorial eye noted 'dicots' for dicots and 'Solonaceae' for Solanaceae, and 'golden boys' rather than 'golden lads' in the quotation from *Cymbeline*. By making me check my memory for this quotation, I stumbled on a

2015 article in the journal *Shakespeare* by E Charles Nelson which neatly puts paid to the widely-held assumption that the ‘golden lads and girls’ refer to dandelion flowers and fluffy seedheads. (Nelson’s article is a thoughtful exploration of vernacular plant names and how misleading their use can sometimes be – a relevant tie-in given the predominant use of common names in *The book of thistles*).

Overall, *The book of thistles* was not woven together tightly enough for me, with some overlong sections (‘War’, in particular), but I found genuine treasures throughout – new plant species and ideas that I want to know more about, which wouldn’t have happened without reading Janaczewska’s book. It’s likely that your great finds in this book will be different to mine – and isn’t that the point of reading?

#### A postscript concerning von Mueller

Readers interested in reaching their own conclusions about the merits of Ferdinand von Mueller’s work in the Victorian Department of Agriculture’s 1893 publication of the *Illustrated description of thistles, etc., included within the provisions of the Thistle Act of 1890* may like to look at this document, available through the Biodiversity Heritage Library <<https://archive.org/details/Illustrateddesc00Muel>>.

Janaczewska notes the high quality of illustrator Mr P Ashley’s illustrations relative to the difficult expression of von Mueller’s text, and the sparse praise von Mueller gave to him. Since English was not von Mueller’s first language, this apparent shortcoming is not so surprising – the *Australasian’s* obituary noted that ‘his English was always German, and therefore not clear or bright’.

As someone working in the horticultural field, von Mueller’s piece struck me as a document written by a knowledgeable and careful Victorian-era botanist, using the tools of his trade, which included rather wordy descriptions (which von Mueller himself acknowledged in his introduction to the pamphlet). It’s also worth remembering that the *Illustrated description of thistles* would likely have found itself used in court proceedings, with or without the involvement of expert witnesses to interpret its content. Von Mueller’s quoted statement forms part of the introduction to the whole pamphlet; it is written in modest and humble language, and it values the work done by a relatively inexperienced botanical illustrator. In this context, his introductory statements simply read as a good faith offering of their new, collaborative piece of work.

As an immigrant who arrive in Australia at 23 and who at 27 became the Victorian Government Botanist until his death in 1896, von Mueller’s

situation as a stranger in a strange land was perhaps not so far removed from the author’s own relocation to Australia. I could not help but think he deserved a more empathetic treatment.

**Dr Sue Murphy** is a lecturer in horticulture at the University of Melbourne’s Burnley Campus.

#### Gabrielle Baldwin (2017) *Things my garden taught me*

Wakefield Press

‘A block of land in Paradise comes with strings attached.’ This is the first lesson that the author learned when she and her husband bought a block to transform into their own piece of heavenly native garden plus wilderness and a simple home.

This and 23 other lessons are outlined in Baldwin’s succinct style, leavened with her dry wit and pertinent insights from writers ranging from Henry Thoreau to Elizabeth Jane Howard.

Friends envy the peace and relaxation inherent in Baldwin’s venture but the author soon realises that creating and maintaining such a Paradise is also about anxiety and frustration. Awareness emerges of the irony in the necessity of spending as much time destroying as she does nurturing. Nor, she notes drily, did chainsaws feature in her dream of a bush block.

Through ‘years of digging and planting and shovelling and hacking’ Baldwin appreciates the need to be ruthless with unwanted plants and achieve the correct balance between working with Nature and working against it. While acknowledging the garden’s peace she also senses ‘a kind of throbbing undercurrent of conflict’. ‘With constant effort,’ she writes, ‘it can be held in a kind of equilibrium, so it never becomes completely chaotic or entropic.’ If all this sounds like unremitting toil, this is an accurate impression, but the results are worth it, as are unexpected by-products, such as Lesson 15’s ‘Heavy work in the garden is empowering for women’.

Gabrielle Baldwin once taught English literature and this enterprise has returned her to much of it with a new and more profound understanding. She shares these lessons with her readers in this entertaining and beautifully produced book about creating a native garden and harvesting new insights about ‘the nature and meaning of our experiences and our place in the world’.

**Dr Penny Hanley** is a Canberra writer and a keen armchair gardener.



# Exhibitions



'*Euonymus europaeus*, Spindle', acrylic ink, Sandra Doyle, from the exhibition 'In Ruskin's Footsteps'.  
courtesy Association of British Botanical Artists



Gynea lily, *Doryanthes excelsa*, watercolour on paper, artist Beverly Allen  
courtesy of the artist

## Botanical art worldwide

A worldwide collaboration linking people to plants through contemporary botanical art will link exhibition venues in 25 countries around the world through special events in May 2018, and especially on 18 May 2018. As Australia's contribution, the Botanical Art Society of Australia's exhibition 'Flora of Australia: a botanical art worldwide exhibition' will open at the Ainslie Art Centre in Canberra on May 18 (the last day of the exhibition is May 27).

The Canberra exhibition features 109 paintings. Forty of these have been selected to be sent digitally around the world for viewing in the other participating countries. Similarly, work from other countries will be shown here.

Readers who are travelling might also like to know of the British exhibition forming part of the same project, 'In Ruskin's Footsteps'. This will be held at the University of Lancaster's Peter Scott Gallery from 18 May to 8 June 2018.

## Kew Gardens

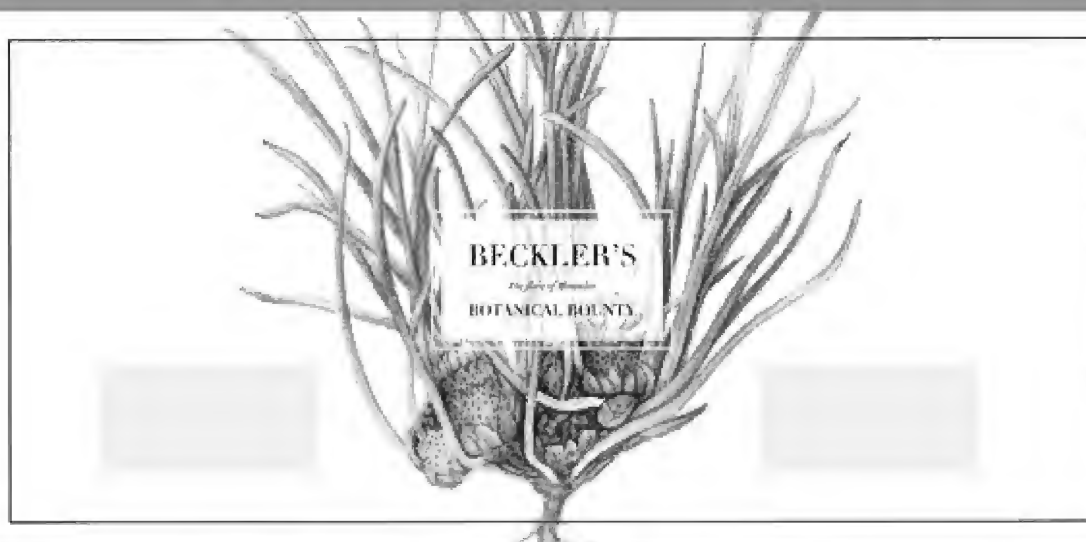
Reminding readers that the Florilegium exhibition at the Shirley Sherwood Gallery at Kew Gardens, England, is open until 16 September 2018. All paintings from the 2016 Sydney Florilegium exhibition are on display at Kew.



A display of the *Florilegium* book welcomes visitors to the Florilegium exhibition, Shirley Sherwood Gallery of Botanical Art, Kew, 2018.

photo Colleen Morris





'Water reservoir at Mutwanji', watercolour c1861, attributed to Burke and Wills expedition member Ludwig Becker, and titled on the verso by Hermann Beckler.

State Library of Victoria

Dr Hermann Beckler was the botanical collector and medical officer of the Burke and Wills Expedition of 1860 as far as Menindee, where he resigned. Beckler sent 120 plant specimens to Ferdinand von Mueller at the Melbourne Herbarium.

As part of the 150th recognition of the expedition in 2010, a group of Melbourne botanical artists decided to celebrate Beckler's contribution by revisiting his plant collections made in Menindee. This exhibition results from the project. The group, led by botanical artist Mali Moir and with help from botanist Andrew Denham, travelled annually to Menindee in outback New South Wales.

The exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ballarat was opened by Professor Tim Entwisle, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. It runs until 27 May 2018.

## 'Cultivating Friends' 2018

There are 64 groups in the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, from capital city, suburban and rural and regional botanical gardens and arboreta. The association's biennial conference is being hosted on 20–22 April 2018 by the Friends of Benalla Botanic Garden and Riverine Parkland in Benalla, Victoria.

Activities during the conference include a visit to the Chesney Vale garden of 'Belvedere', and to a Stephanie Alexander kitchen garden at a Benalla school.



Postcard of Benalla Botanic Gardens, c1920–54, AE Box, Rose Stereograph Co glass negative.

State Library of Victoria

# Dialogue

## Whiteley state heritage listing

In March 2018 state heritage listing was announced for the famous artist Brett Whiteley's home, with the view of Lavender Bay which he depicted so often, and Wendy Whiteley's 'Secret Garden', a young garden taking on heritage value as it is increasingly found and used. This heartening and unusual heritage listing of the house and its visual curtilage acknowledges the intangible values of a person's attachment (and by extension, our own attachments) to a place, through art.

Stuart Read



Left: A sculpture in the Whiteley garden. Right: Owner Wendy Whiteley (left), North Sydney Mayor Jilly Gibson (centre) and NSW Heritage Minister Gabrielle Upton announce the heritage listing in March 2018.  
photos Stuart Read

## 2018 World Parks Week

World Parks Week will be held from 28 April to 6 May 2018. World Parks Week is an opportunity to celebrate parks and green spaces. The week's aims are to communicate the critical importance of parks in a global context, promote best practice by parks services, and encourage people to enjoy their local park and appreciate the importance of green space.

Details at [www.worldurbanparks.org/en/news-events/news/612-2018-parks-week-save-the-date](http://www.worldurbanparks.org/en/news-events/news/612-2018-parks-week-save-the-date)



## THE GARDENS TRUST

### Garden History essay prize

The 14th annual Mavis Batey essay competition of the UK Gardens Trust is now open to students and recent graduates worldwide.

Submissions of 5000 to 6000 words on any subject relevant to garden history must be received before 18 May 2018. The prize includes an award of £250, free membership of the Gardens Trust for a year, and consideration for publication in the peer-reviewed scholarly journal *Garden History*.

Details at <http://thegardenstrust.org/research/prize/>

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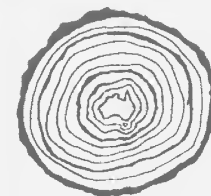
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*Australian Garden History* welcomes contributions of any length up to 1200 words. Prospective contributors are strongly advised to contact the editor before submitting text or images.

The views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily shared by the Australian Garden History Society.

# Getting to know them

stories from the AGHS oral history collection

## Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, DBE

A striking and beautiful woven portrait of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch AC, DBE is currently on display at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. Dame Elisabeth was the Australian Garden History Society's inaugural Chair, and then became our first Patron (1981–1989).

Ever since 1980 when the Society was formed, members have been acutely conscious of the need to capture the experiences and memories of garden people. As early as 1981, Oline Richards wrote in *Australia Garden History* of the need to record the recollections of 'designers, gardeners, nurserymen, owners, botanists'.

In the years before its 25th anniversary, the Society commissioned an extensive program of oral history interviews. Roslyn Burge, convener of the Society's oral history subcommittee, described this project in an article on Jean Walker for the January 2018 issue of *Australian Garden History* (vol 29 no 3, pp 29–30). Roslyn's article lists those interviewed (this list is also available through our website [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)).

Bronwyn Blake, Liz Chappell, John Maurer and Stuart Read are the other members of the Society's oral history subcommittee. Interviewers are Lyn Barrett, Roslyn Burge, Liz Chappell, Laurel Cheetham, Glenn Cooke, Sallyann Dakis, Jane Holth, Carol Mansfield, Stuart Read, Jenny Sloman, John Thompson, and Diane Wilkins.

We would like to mark our coming 40th anniversary by acknowledging the significant contributions of those interviewed, and also of those who have given their time to make these recordings and ensure that they are publicly available. Leading up to the celebrations of our 40th anniversary in 2020, Australian Garden History will present selections from the oral history collection. We begin with extracts from Jane Holth's interview with Dame Elisabeth at her home Cruden Farm, Langwarrin, Victoria, in 2002.

Portrait of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch 2000 woven in the Victorian Tapestry Workshop by Christopher Pyett (photographic image), Normana Wight (computer treatment) and Merrill Dumbrell (interpretation and weaving). Warp cotton no 12 seinetwine, weft wool and cotton. Commissioned with funds provided by Marilyn Darling AC 2000.

National Portrait Gallery collection, Canberra.

### Suggested reading

Anne Latreille (c2007) *Garden of a lifetime: Dame Elisabeth Murdoch at Cruden Farm*. Pan Macmillan Australia, Sydney.



**Dame Elisabeth** I've always been interested in history. David Yencken approached me and really sort of almost bullied me into accepting the idea that there should be an Australia Garden History Society and that I would help to get it going.

I think there was a lot of enthusiasm for starting an Australia Garden History Society – maybe a lot of us weren't very clear in the heads but we were enthusiastic and the idea appealed to us ...

I think there's a serenity in gardening ... and [it] somehow contributes something to people's character.

**Jane Holth** What involvement did you have in gardening ... before you actually established the society?

**Dame Elisabeth** Well I'd helped to build this garden. In 1928 we were married and there was a very small garden here and Edna Walling had designed the walled gardens ... So I've really been deeply involved in the garden since 1929 and I have a very great feeling for the garden.

**JH** Did it [the Society] have a purpose in the beginning, a particular purpose?

**Dame Elisabeth** Well I think it was to start the historical records, to build up the history ... and to look to the future – how it could be strengthened and how it could be recorded.

**JH** How do you envisage the future of the society?

**Dame Elisabeth** You can't, I don't think you can foresee the future of anything these days. I just say I travel in hope.



The Australian Garden History Society promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities.